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**“EVOKED FROM MEMORY”.
THE WAR AND THE GERMAN RACIAL
RESEARCH IN THE ACCOUNTS
OF THE PODHALE INHABITANTS**

The series of records entitled “Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung IDO”, held for over half a century in the archival resources of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., was cleaned up and described for the first time in greater detail by Gretchen Schafft, and it unveiled an unprecedented page in the Nazi occupation history of many communities in the General-gouvernement (Schafft 2006). I recall the first meeting at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Jagiellonian University with Prof. Krzysztof Stopka, then the director of the Jagiellonian University Archives, who as a representative of the Polish side involved in the process of restitution of the IDO materials, gave an account of his visit to the Smithsonian Institution. He talked about the German collection and the documents it contains: photographs, questionnaires, surveys from racial, medical and sociological examinations, psychological tests, reports from ethnicity studies research, ethnographic data, as well as fingerprints and hair samples placed in envelopes. It sounded like an unbelievable story – traces and remnants of human lives, a shocking and at the same time fascinating material. For me, a person from Podhale, the most intriguing were the archives concerning this region. At the same time, it was also interesting to ask: How has it happened that during all the years since the end of World War II, the topic of the German research project, which involved more than two thousand people and produced about 22 thousand documents, had remained hidden

in the corners of human memory, cast outside the framework of social awareness?¹⁹ “I don’t know why we didn’t talk about it. There was no need to bring such things up”, commented one of the witnesses of the German action from Szaflary (J.M., born 1927, Szaflary). Combining the above opinion with other statements, it can be assumed that for many people forced research supported by the local occupation authorities, during which both men and women had to fully undress, was a degrading episode. In addition, in the light of the accounts of some Szaflary residents, the German action of racial measurements was perceived by many as a mere medical examination. Nobody informed the subjects about the aims of anthropological measurements and medical examinations. However, they remembered the cases where doctors employed by the SRV provided medical advice to the local population and even administered appropriate medicines for the ailments they suffered. However, it may have been forgotten that the SRV’s search for “racially valuable” people did not translate into any repressive actions against the surveyed inhabitants of Podhale, as in the case of other local communities in the GG area. The exception in this respect was the Jewish population from the Tarnów ghetto, where the research was particularly dramatic. The examinations were conducted immediately before the extermination of the Jewish community, which was aware of its annihilation (Schafft 2006: 13–32). Fortunately, the anthropometric data collected in Podhale did not find any practical application, although, as the Washington documentation shows, the results of anthropometric measurements and medical examinations were already preliminarily processed and described by the SRV employees. For example, attempts were made to indicate the percentage of gene features determining the racial origin of an individual. Characteristic in this context are photographs of a young girl from Kościelisko with a signature: “½ Highlander, ½ Celtisch”.

Apart from individual references, this German research has never been mentioned in regional literature or in scientific historical studies.²⁰ Neither

¹⁹ This omitting and forgetting brings to mind an analogy with the concept of passive oblivion proposed by Paul Ricoeur. According to the French philosopher, passive forgetting focuses on the strategy of avoidance, motivated by the desire not to investigate, not to learn anything about a sensitive topic. While Ricoeur’s forgetting referred to criminal acts and attitudes of evading responsibility for the evil committed, it was a humiliating, embarrassing episode for the Szaflary inhabitants, which some experienced as a traumatic experience (Ricoeur 1995: 38–39).

²⁰ Although the materials published in Poland after the World War II wrote about the activities of IDO, the topic of anthropological research and field expeditions of the SRV employees had not been a subject of any extensive analysis. This issue was not even addressed by strictly historical studies on the occupation of Podhale, such as the volume of works edited by Janusz Berghauzen

were those who participated in the research as Polish auxiliary staff of German scientists, contacted them, consulted or guided them. Maybe such an attitude resulted from a fear of accusations and charges of collaboration? In the post-war reality of the People's Republic of Poland it was not difficult to make such a one-sided and a seemingly simple judgement. Therefore, the witnesses of the action of racial measurements did not take note of this event, as if by an act of oblivion they tried to get rid of the paralysing memory of the unpleasant experience. After all, forgetting, which is an inseparable element of remembering (memory without gaps would be an unbearable burden), may determine a person's overall ability to "succeed" in activities and significant undertakings (Ricoeur 1995: 38; Ankersmit 2003: 25–27).

A typical example illustrating the historiographical non-existence of German research in the post-war literature is a publication released in 2008 by the teaching staff of the school in Szaflary entitled "To rescue from ... oblivion. Szaflary and its inhabitants in the years 1918–1945" (Szlek 2008: 9–312). It included over 60 wartime accounts of the oldest inhabitants of Szaflary. Among the stories presented concerning both personal themes and events in rural life, there is no information about German research, although most of the authors of the accounts were covered by it. An exception is made for Katarzyna Marek, who was born in 1926: "I also remember one day when the Germans took the inhabitants of Szaflary to the presbytery, where the inhabitants of other towns were also brought, and several German and Polish doctors carried out tests there" (Szlek 2008: 172). This is one of the few references to German anthropological research that has so far been found in publications on the subject of World War II in Podhale region.

Before the SRV collection was delivered to Poland, at the end of 2007, the Management of the Jagiellonian University Archives turned to the IEiAK employees for pilot studies in Podhale in order to determine whether witnesses of German research were still alive. This was to be facilitated by the list of Kościelisko residents drawn up by the SRV employees in 1941. Thanks to the help of the then president of the Podhale Residents' Association in Kościelisko, it

entitled *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939–1945* (Podhale during the Occupation 1939–1945) (1977), a monograph by Józef Kasperek *Podhale w latach wojny i okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945* (Podhale during the War and the German Occupation 1939–1945) (1990), or publications by the chronicler of Podhale, Włodzimierz Wnuk, including *Walka podziemia na szczytach* (The Struggle of the Underground at the Tops) (1980). Also in a monographic study *Szaflary. Wieś podhalańska* (Szaflary. A Village of Podhale), edited by Mieczysław Adamczyk (1993), which contains wartime reminiscences of Wojciech Kamiński, who during the occupation served as the head of the Szaflary commune (*wójt*), there is no information about the German action of racial measurements.

was possible to identify more than 10 living people. Unfortunately, most of them refused to provide any information and were critical of our searches: “Oh, why unearth it now?”²¹ (the original comment in Polish is in the Podhale highlanders’ dialect – trans. K.D.).

In the end, only three people agreed to meet. Our interlocutors were greatly surprised and also got emotional when they saw the photos from their childhood and their personal questionnaires with anthropometric data: “Oh dear, it’s me, look at this face, I would have never thought that in old age I will see myself as a child” (W.N.-K., born 1932, Kościelisko) (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.). Looking at the photos they recalled their childhood: “Oh, God, it’s me... Such a little girl. I remember this sweater, it was green... And this was my dear brother, Staś... [kisses his photo]. Does not live anymore (A.R., born 1929, Kościelisko) (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.).

The documents extracted from the archival existence returned to their existential source – to those whose images they preserved, releasing memories of the war period along the way.

The two eldest women, looking at the photos from the SRV collection in which their loved ones appeared, slowly remembered the circumstances of the visit of German researchers. The youngest, however, could not reconstruct the situation in which she was photographed. Her photograph, on the other hand, namely the bandaged finger on her leg, reminded her of a childhood episode: “Oh, here I have my finger bandaged. I remember the cow stepping on my leg. That’s how you used to walk: barefoot. There was poverty” (A.Ch., born 1935, Kościelisko).

Meetings and conversations with the residents of Kościelisko were recorded. A short film was made, which was then presented at the Polish Embassy in the USA.²² the film showing the witnesses of the German research project years later surprised and aroused interest among American audiences. It also confirmed the validity of the Polish party’s efforts to regain the SRV documentation. It was an important argument in favour of transferring original materials to Poland. It showed that the deposited materials, forgotten in Washington, would be brought back to life in Poland.

After submitting the original documents from the SRV collection to the Jagiellonian University Archives, a team of IEiAK employees started working

²¹ It can be assumed that this negative response was due to the fear that the sensitive issue of Goraleńcy would be the subject of the meeting. I am writing more about this further on.

²² The said film is held in the archives of the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Jagiellonian University.

on the German archival material. In the research project concerning Podhale, carried out under the direction of Dr Małgorzata Maj,²³ two main objectives were set. First of all, the transferred SRV resources had to be organised and verified. This work was necessary in order to be able to begin the most important and urgent task – to reach the people subjected to anthropological and medical examination, who were nowadays at a very advanced age. The aim was to record the testimonies of the witnesses of those events in order to determine whether and how the German research was remembered by them. We were interested in what older people could say today, more than 60 years after the end of the war, about the German research: how it proceeded, what emotions and experiences it triggered, what did the local people say about it? It can be assumed that for the inhabitants of Podhale, especially the highlanders from Szaflary, the campaign of anthropometric measurements and medical examinations, which lasted almost a month and a half in the local presbytery and covered almost the entire population, from two-year-old children to nearly 90-year-old elderly people, was an event which was at least strange and difficult to comprehend. In the dramatic wartime period, suddenly a team of Germans arrives in the village, before which whole families are obliged to appear and undergo "strange" measurements. In addition, adults must expose their bodies and provide information about diseases, and then are ordered to pose to a photograph in at least a few positions.

"I WAS HAPPY THAT I DON'T HAVE BLUE EYES"

As a result of the research carried out so far, it was possible to conduct interviews with several dozens people who, as few-year-old children, were covered by the German racial research programme. Their recollections provided valuable data, which allowed to complete and verify the knowledge about the course and circumstances of the research. It turned out that certain events and facts from the Nazi occupation past that were "cast away" and found themselves outside the history of the town were remembered by many people. Importantly, information obtained from the interviews with German and Austrian anthropologists was in most cases confirmed by the IDO documentation. The first

²³ The project "Development of ethnographic materials concerning Podhale from the collections of the Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit", no. NN 109 214 835, financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, was conducted at the IEiAK in 2009–2010. The research among the Podhale residents was conducted by Dr M. Maj and the author of the presented text.

steps in the field were not easy. The local population was very cautious about our search. Many people feared that it was connected with the German action Goralenvolk, which still evokes a lot of emotions and controversy in the Podhale environment. “Oh, why touch it now, there was enough of harm. No, I don’t want to talk” (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.) – one of the residents of Kościelisko responded briefly and decisively to our request for a meeting. Let us recall that the action of Goralenvolk in the plans of the occupant was aimed at depriving the Podhale inhabitants of national identity and breaking the national unity of Poles by creating a temporary entity in the form of a highlanders’ nation. In order to accomplish this task, the Germans managed to attract a group of highlanders, headed by Waław Krzeptowski, who became the head of a collaborative body called the Highlanders’ Committee. The members of the Committee were particularly active in publishing the so-called highlanders’ Kennkarten, i.e. the identity cards marked with the letter “G”, the acceptance of which was associated with the accession to the Goralenvolk (Wnuk 1980: 31–46; Szatkowski 2012: 255–333). Despite intensified propaganda, manipulation and numerous forgeries performed by German officers and collaborators, only about 18% of the inhabitants of the Nowy Targ powiat accepted the “G” identity card.²⁴ Thus, the idea of creating a highlanders’ nation failed,²⁵ and the underground organizations operating in the Podhale region (Wnuk 1980; Kasperek 1990; Sikora 2014), including the Tatra Mountains’ Confederation established by the Podhale-based indigenous intelligentsia in 1941, whose aim was to fight with the “Krzeptowski ideology”, contributed significantly to the suppression of the highlanders’ separatism.²⁶ Gradually, with the support of local social leaders, regional activists and acquaintances, the doors of the Podhale houses

²⁴ The data refer only to the district (*powiat*) of Nowy Targ, except for a part of the districts of Limanowa, Myślenice, Nowy Sącz, Sucha Beskidzka, and Żywiec, where the number of collected highlanders’ Kennkarte IDs could have been even higher than in the area of the actual Podhale (Szatkowski 2012: 330). It is worth noting that in the case of the Podhale villages, the percentage of “G” identity cards collected was much lower than in the urban centres of Podhale, such as Nowy Targ or Zakopane, and amounted to approximately 5% (Wnuk 1980: 37–39).

²⁵ Although the action of Goralenvolk ended in a fiasco, it left its mark both in the history of Podhale and in intra-group relations. Cases of denunciation, intimidation of local people or forcing them to accept highlanders’ identity cards left many painful experiences and torn wounds. After the war, these difficult, sensitive issues were surrounded with silence. Perhaps this was an attempt to return to the normal rhythm of community life, to maintain proper neighbourly relations, although paradoxically, what was to be forgotten was a disturbing trace, undetectedly gnawing at those who survived the war.

²⁶ The head of the Tatra Mountains Confederation was a young teacher from Szaflary, a poet, folk, and regional activist Augustyn Suski (1907–1942). Unfortunately, the organization he led was quickly deconspired, and Suski himself died in Auschwitz on May 24, 1942 (Kasperek 1990: 245–255; Mlekodaj, Sadlik 2008).

opened. People started to talk more courageously about the events of the Nazi occupation period, also about difficult situations, which they previously preferred to omit. With time, they initiated and strived for meetings themselves, in order to pass on and leave their own testimony of the Nazi occupation time to their descendants. An extremely important and useful tool in the collection of ethnographic material, a medium *sui generis* releasing memories from the past, were the documents presented by us from the German collection.

Most of the meetings were held in the interlocutors' houses. Depending on the situation, the attitude and the approach of the informer towards our research, as well as his or her competences (knowledge, language, education), the interview took the form of a free or controlled conversation. Sometimes it was transformed into a few-hour narrative about the events and the individual fate during the occupation. This was the case when the interviewee, influenced by the documents presented, remembered a small detail which gradually released successive episodes from the past, forming a long narrative. By referring to a specific event from the years of the occupation, almost all of them returned in their stories to many other, most often dramatic events from the period of World War II. In such a situation, it was the witness who decided about the course of the narration and the conveyed content. Other times the presented SRV documents gave an impetus to spontaneous, short, unfinished sentences, which carried an intense message and a high emotional load. It also happened that informers waited with memories written down on pieces of paper, providing a pre-arranged and thought-through version of the events. In this way, a wealth of ethnographic data was obtained, ranging from information on the circumstances of the German research to accounts of events in rural life, the surrounding area and the entire region, to personal, autobiographical stories. All these direct messages can be considered individual testimonies of past experiences and war experiences. Of course, these are narrativised testimonies,²⁷ which bring closer the way of seeing the distant past by the person who describes it from the perspective of the present (Kaniowska 2003: 59–60; 2006).²⁸

²⁷ In the presented text I consciously use the terms "witness" and "testimony", indicating the specificity of this type of ethnographic data, determined by the context of the research situation and the way the source came into being. It is the direct contact of the researcher with the examined person – a witness and a participant of past events who entrusts the researcher with a part of his history – that distinguishes this type of sources from other ethnographic data, such as photographs, documents and materials from family collections, indirect information or notes based on observations.

²⁸ As Katarzyna Kaniowska emphasizes, the critical self-reflection that has taken place in contemporary anthropology under the influence of hermeneutical ideas has given rise to a belief in the dialogical nature of anthropological knowledge, which in turn has changed the status of the researcher

As it has already been mentioned, the documentation presented to our interviewees (including questionnaires with a detailed description of their family farm, palm prints and, above all, photographs) evoked events which still aroused a lot of emotions. In the case of accounts concerning the course of the anthropological examinations, our interviewees remembered many details, such as the way they were positioned to a photograph, the necessity to strip naked, the characteristic smell in the room, the tools for measuring them, or the fact that Germans gave sweets to those children whose sequential number contained the digit 0.

I had number 900. All those who had an equal number received sweets. Me too. One of those who examined us, shook out some sweets from a jar and gave them to me. But I did not eat them because to me they were repulsive (S.K., born 1920, Szaflary) (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.).

I remember these examinations well. They lasted probably a whole month in 1942. There were several stands. We were to move along from one stand to another. There was a team of several doctors, about 10 people. The examinations took place at the presbitery. They were measuring us. They asked about the diseases. They examined everything. Eyes, throat, including hair. We also left fingerprints. (...) It was a matter of raciality. They classified us into the Germanic race. We were supposed to be descendants of the Germans here in Podhale. This is how people talked about this research (J.M., born 1927, Nowy Targ).

Most of the interlocutors, while talking about the research, underlined the accompanying feeling of fear and terror. The German research action was namely universally associated with selecting children to be germanised.

I remember that when Germans came, our mama cried because she was afraid that they would take us to Germany. Nobody knew exactly what these examinations are for but they were afraid. In our presence [the kids' presence] fathers did not talk much (W.N.K., born 1932, Kościelisko) (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.).

and researched, as well as the way of understanding the source and truth in the scientific examination. The researched (the examined) ceased to be a passive and neutral informer, and the researcher lost power and authority, becoming an author of an anthropological narrative which "is always a transformation of someone's performance". This change legitimized the subjectivism of cognition. A subjective experience has thus become an important link and even a specific value of anthropological knowledge, understood according to the new paradigm as "a standardised interpretation of the facts and experiences of the researched and the researcher" (Kaniowska 2003: 59–60).

When we going to school in Kościelisko, Germans came a few times and walked around the classroom and looked at us to see how we look, and they were most interested in those who had light hair and blue eyes. So then we already knew being children that Germans are planning in the future to as if take these children with Nordic features away and give to German families. (...) And we were so afraid of Germans, oh Jesus Christ! After that I did not sleep at night, [I thought] what would happen when they come and take me. And so on and so on. I already planned that I will escape to the woods and will sit in the woods and will hide there (J.P., born 1928, Zakopane) (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.).

When I went to primary school in Nowy Targ, there were some people coming and looking for something. They looked into the eyes to see who had blue eyes. There was Zosia Michalikówna who had blonde hair and blue eyes. I was happy that I did not have blue eyes (M.M., born 1929, Nowy Targ).

We were afraid. People obeyed because they were threatened with death penalty. They gave us injections. Our people said they were poisoning us. Some people were fleeing the examinations. They said that those who had been injected would die. People were afraid. They did not know exactly why these tests were carried out. There was talk that the Germans chose people for their Aryan race (S.L., born 1920, Witów).

In the case of women and young girls, fear was combined with a sense of shame, which was caused by the need to strip naked in front of complete strangers.

The embarrassment was exacerbated by the fact that women were subjected to an intimate body examination, which humiliated them. Even today, not many of them wanted to mention this incident.²⁹

People went. Also aunts Bartaski went, they were very pious, and they cried so terribly. Because they do such examinations to women there. They looked everywhere. You had to undress. And they were deeply affected by that. They went to examinations, they listened and then they cried. Because they have been mistreated. People looked differently at it once. Today people don't care. Because everywhere

²⁹ During the interviews, our interviewees did not usually refer to the thread related to the requirement of undressing during the examinations. They started to talk about it only when they were provoked by the presented documentation with outlines of the bodies that had been preserved in the SRV documentation.

on the TV they show everything. Erstwhile it was awful. (...) You had to undress. This means boys had to pull down their pants and we had to raise our skirts. They looked everywhere. It was a shame for us. Because who undressed then? Now it is different. They show nakedness everywhere (M.W., born 1924, Szaflary).

Some people laughed at it all, joked – that they looked into every hole. Others felt offended. They said it was a profanation of the presbitery (J.M., born 1927, Nowy Targ).

According to the available data, the SRV team stayed in Szaflary from June 18 to July 25, 1942, and in Witów from July 26 to August 18 of the same year. While in Szaflary 1,003 people were measured, which constituted almost the entire population, in Witów only 319 adults aged between 20 and 50 were measured. It should be noted that two years earlier, i.e. at the beginning of 1940, before the founding of IDO, pilot anthropological and ethnicity studies research was also conducted in other Podhale towns, including Bukowina Tatrzańska, Kościelisko and Poronin. The research action was led by Dr Anton Plügel, a later employee of IDO, who at that time was employed as a museums' officer at the Department of Science and Education of the GG government's Office of Home Affairs (Maj, Trebunia-Staszal 2011). The photographic material he collected in the spring of 1940 was used in an article published in "Das Vorfeld", in which he outlined a programme of racial and ethnographic research in the GG, emphasizing their importance in the context of the implementation of the Nazi ethnic policy towards the occupied nations (Plügel 1941a).

Anthropometric measurements were also carried out in Zakopane. It is difficult to identify where they took place, as no data are available in the SRV documentation. One of our informers claimed that it was a building located at Krupówki Street, in the area where a Delikatesy Społem grocery store is currently located. It was probably the seat of the pre-war town hall (Jost 2001).

When you came, a Nazi man in a uniform was sitting in the first room, and he had a doctor's coat on his back. A civilian was standing next to him, also in a doctor's coat. It was he who asked and translated everything to the Nazi. Mum said her name, her first name and something else. And then they took fingerprints from mom and from me as well. Then we went to the second room. Then I felt such fear. Because it was the time when I was to have the First Communion. In front of us there was a family, where there were three boys and they all left shaved, their heads were bare. And my reaction was like this: I was to go to the First communion, and they will also cut off my ponytails. First they ordered me to undress

and I only stayed in panties. I cried, grabbed my mom, I didn't want to let her go. I was afraid that they would shave my head and how will I go to the communion. There was a screen in the room. Mum and grandmother had to undress and they were examined behind a screen. They measured the circumference of my head, the distance between my eyes and [they inspected] my whole body: my hands, my chest, even my feet from below. I remember that I was photographed after being undressed. The one who was in a white coat and who was a translator took the pictures of us. I don't remember if they asked me about anything, I don't remember from all that horror. I was terrified (S.Ch., born 1933, Zakopane).

It is worth emphasizing once again that after collation and analysis of the reports collected in the field, most of the data obtained on the course of the research conducted by the SRV overlap, which is confirmed by the preserved IDO documentation.

THE POWER OF A PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

This return to the German racial research action among the population of Podhale almost always caused that our interviewees, as it were, "by the way", brought out other events from the period of World War II from their memories. Photographs taken by anthropologists and ethnologists from IDO proved to be a special medium. Most emotions were aroused by materials that directly referred to our interviewees, especially questionnaires with their names and data from anthropometric measurements and photos from their childhood. Equally impressive were the photographs of relatives, family members, especially those who died during the occupation, sometimes shortly after their image was placed in the SRV file. Those were these images from the past, presenting places, situations and persons they knew, that allowed our interlocutors to travel in time into the past. This was often due to small details captured in a photo, such as a bandaged finger on the leg, a flower in the window, the colour of the sweater, or even a bow at the blouse, which caused a lively reaction of a resident of Szaflary, now a 90-year-old woman: "Oh Jesus and Saint Mary... how come I am here? Oh My God! Where did you get that from? How come? Oh, stop it. Oh, I remember this blouse, with such a bow. It was sewn in the city" (M.W., born 1924, Szaflary) (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.).

The aforementioned details triggered memories of tragic, although sometimes also funny events from one's own childhood and youth, as well as

stories about other people or events from rural life. The observed reactions of the interlocutors to the photographs presented to them, and the extraction of past images from their memories, brought to mind Roland Barthes' reflections on photography. His concept of the punctum of a photograph as something that spontaneously "flows from the image", forges, pierces and penetrates the viewer, turned out to be extremely pertinent in relation to the observed process of evoking memories through the photographic detail (Barthes 1996: 47). It can be said that the data recorded during the interviews are an exemplification of customs observations on photographs made years ago by a French researcher. The seemingly unimportant details hidden in the field of photography persuaded the viewer, taking episodes out of his memory, which in turn became the starting point for more extensive stories about the war fate. In our research we can say that the punctum has a multiplying effect. While Barthes in his study made a photograph itself a subject of reflection, presenting characters, situations and events unknown to him from autopsy, the interlocutors unexpectedly faced their own childhood images because of the SRV documents presented to them. Suddenly, before an elderly person's eyes appears an image, recorded in the past, which is familiar and peculiar at the same time – after all, taking photographs in the countryside at that time was not a common practice. The witness looks at himself – at a fragment of his "being in the past". This existential link between the subject looking at a photo and his image from many years ago creates an exceptional situation. Emotional identification, this identification with the image from the past, enhances the power of its influence: "Oh My, it's me? Oh, God, I would have never thought that I will see myself as a child" (W.N.K., born 1932, Kościelisko) (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.).

Documents and especially photographs related to people known to our interlocutors made the "witnesses" relive past events. The old images, situations, events and accompanying emotions returned. Tears appeared, sometimes long moments of silence. The moments of suspension and silence were related not only to the coverage of dramatic situations or traumatic experiences, but also often to the fear of disclosing ethically ambiguous attitudes and behaviours. This was the case, for example, with the subject of people cooperating with the occupying power, when one of the interlocutors with tears in her eyes for a long time could not overcome her own doubts about the disclosure of the name of a neighbour collaborating with Germans: "I don't know if should... after all, you cannot talk badly of the dead, I am sorry... Oh Jesus, maybe I'm sinning, so the collaborator was... [here the name was given]" (S.Ch., born 1933, Zakopane).

Equally difficult to reveal for the interviewee were the circumstances of her mother's acceptance of a highlanders' Kennkarte issued by the occupational authorities as a sign of her accession to the Goralenvolk. She explained the situation crying:

Grandmother, mother, was forced to do what she didn't want to do. In her opinion, she did not believe that this was something in line with her convictions. They preyed on it. And about three such events I would like to tell. Every time my mother was asked if she wanted her father to come back from Germany. The first one was about the Kennkarte identity cards. The Goralenvolk. At that time there was sadness. Mom was crying. That was the first time. The second time was when my mother's grandmother had to go to make garlands for the gate greeting Frank. And this was the third time that we had to go to be examined whether we are highlanders or not. I just remembered three such events. That's why, as I said, it was sad at home, mom, grandmother were crying. It was just mom, grandmother and me, and there was no man, so to speak, no one to support us. (...) My father was sent to work in a quarry in Austria during the war. There he listened to the radio and one of the workers reported that. Dad was sent to prison. At home, we stayed alone with mom and grandmom. It was very hard. We were worried about dad. Sometimes Krzpotowska's daughter-in-law would come and persuaded us to accept the identity card. Mom initially refused. But when she began to torment us with questions, whether we want our dad to return, and whether we want to survive until the end of the war, my mother who was worried about dad and me agreed to accept the identity card. Yes, ... yes. She said: "You have to take it if you want your father to return". It was... like I said, maybe my mother didn't want to take this Kennkarte, but it was done under compulsion (S.Ch., born 1933, Zakopane).

As the material taken by us, as well as publications about the Goralenvolk to date, indicate, the action of issuing the "G" Kennkarte IDs took a complicated and often dramatic course. When making the decision to accept the highlander's proof, many people were guided by the concern for the safety of their loved ones. While talking about the Goralenvolk with older inhabitants of Podhale, I have several times encountered such an attempt to explain this issue. As the inhabitant of Nowy Targ, who came from Maruszyna, explained, some highlanders, in order to protect their families from the negative consequences of opposing the Goralenvolk, chose a sneaky strategy of acting in accordance with the highlanders' saying: "And it's good to have an uncle also in hell". Usually the wife accepted a highlanders' identity card, whereas the husband, as the one who wielded the honour of the family,

chose a Polish identity card (J.S., born 1933, Maruszyna). Undoubtedly, documents from the period of the war preserved in the archives, as well as studies conducted so far, confirm cases where different identification options were declared within one family. It was not uncommon for parents to apply for Polish documents, while for their children they took the Goralenvolk identity cards (Szatkowski 2012: 282, 291). Also during our research a similar case was found, when the father of one of informers, a former soldier fighting under Józef Piłsudski, chose a Polish card for himself, while he “enrolled his son as a highlander”. “Daddy took the Polish card because he was always a Pole, and he enrolled me in the highlanders’ school in Zakopane and he enrolled me as a highlander. He was probably anxious about me” (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.) – confessed a resident of Harenda (F.Ch., born 1926, Harenda), looking at his image from the past, photographed by German researchers during the collection of documentation concerning students of the pre-war Wood Industry Vocational School, renamed by the occupation authorities to Berufsfachschule für Goralische Volkskunst – the Vocational School of Highlanders’ Folk Art in Zakopane.

Almost always the impulse coming from the photograph turned out to be stronger than fear. A photograph provoked to bring out what had been intentionally or unconsciously rejected and forgotten (Ankersmit 2003: 25–41).

The persuasive power of the photographic image was revealed in a special way during the meeting with a resident of Kościelisko. The conversations were accompanied by strong emotions: anxiety, uncertainty and fear. Although the interlocutor could not describe the stay of German researchers in the village (she was three years old at the time), photographs of her parents standing in the background of the family home provoked her to recollect her memories from the Nazi occupation times. Sixty years after the end of the war, she decided to reveal a secret story of hiding a Jewish woman and being persecuted by a neighbor who threatened he would turn her whole family in for helping a Jewish woman. For more than half a century, the story has been hidden but under the influence of the situation that we caused, it has been made public for the first time. The interlocutor revealed an event that had bothered her, which she had been hiding all her life in the corners of her mind.

I remember a room upstairs that we were not allowed to talk about at home. Our family hid there a Jewish woman with a little daughter. Sometimes I peeked through a slightly open door and saw how the Jewish woman put holy pictures with Our Lady and Jesus on the bed and taught her daughter how to say Pater Noster. Unfortunately, I do not know what happened to them. I only remember

that my parents were very scared. Once this... this one came to us... and threatened that if Mum didn't turn the Jewish girl in, our whole house would be burnt. He watched our house and our windows... Then he would invade us and intrusively questioned and tormented Mum. He sniffed like a dog. "Who are you hiding there in that room? The light is on there. I am telling you that if you do not remove them, the house will go up with smoke". And the parents took them somewhere at night shortly before the end of the war, although the Jewish woman promised that if they kept her until the end of the war, they would be generously rewarded (S.R., born 1937, Kościelisko).

It is worth noting, however, that the inhabitants of Podhale, despite the death penalty administered for hiding Jews, helped the Jews and paid for it with their own lives. For example on May 20, 1942, in Czarny Dunajec, the Nazis executed Karol Chracz from Wróblówka, who helped Józef Lehrer and his daughter. He was buried together with the shot Jews in a common grave in the Jewish cemetery (Kasperek 1990: 159).

Episodes and events connected with the fate of the Jewish population during the occupation were usually cited as one of the most dramatic experiences, which left a lasting mark on the memory of our interviewees. These were usually situations when interviewees – then several-year-old children – accidentally witnessed executions and crimes. Years later, they drew pictures of those events, using visual observations of memorized objects, places, details of victims' clothing or the appearance of the torturers. Often, these details marked the story line of the narrative, which combined and organized the frozen shreds of memories into the form of a living story.³⁰ Such was the character of the account of a man from Witów about the tragic fate of a local Jewish woman named Estera. For many months she was hiding in a house in the vicinity of a local watchtower, where German officers were stationed. Shelter was provided by her sister, who married a highlander and took the name of Stanisława, which probably saved her from being taken to the ghetto in Nowy Targ.

Within a week's time since the outbreak of the war, the Germans came here and took over a watchtower, which used to be ours, Polish. (...) Germans were like

³⁰ Some of the interviewees, usually those endowed with storytelling skills, tried to convey the drama of the presented events through appropriate intonation, gestures and facial expressions. These significant means of expression, which draw and emphasize the specificity of a living story, unfortunately freeze in the process of transcription, when the researcher materializes them in the form of a written note. Nevertheless, even those narrations, stripped of their situational context, carry traces or shadows of living speech (see Kaniowska 2006).

Germans. They... those who were in the watchtower, they weren't such, so to say... They were not aggressive... I remember it, because it was the house where I lived.³¹ But after about two months some rigours kicked in. There were already such announcements: surrender the radio, surrender the weapons... surrender the bikes, remove pigeons... But life went on. Later a roundup of these Jews began. They confiscated Jews. For example, this Staska, who was baptized, had to register and was given a band with a Jewish sign [a David's star is meant]... She had her siblings here. These siblings went somewhere beyond Nowy Targ [where there was a ghetto] or to Czarny Dunajec, I don't know exactly where. Her sister, Estera, came back... And she came to that house, they agreed on that as sisters. And she lived [in hiding] in that house. But what happened. She was cooking for herself. So this German here, because a man by the name Kajzer was the commander, he did not raid them himself... but he gave orders to be performed at once. And what happened. She is cooking and he is watching... And then he sent two Germans to check this house. The smoke went up from the chimney once, twice, thrice... the door was closed and they knocked it out by force and caught her. And they escorted her later... Apparently, they searched the apartment or something... and they escorted her. And she was such a poor woman, schooled... I saw this because I stood by the road. They took her to the watchtower. She [shows his hand] had a handbag here, like the one that women wear, she had such a handbag on her arm. Some two hours passed, a carriage came and it brought a guy in civilian clothes. He wore a jacket, I still remember it today... He got off the carriage and I saw he had a machine gun underneath ... because this jacket folded back [he shows how]. He went inside [i.e. inside the watchtower]. And I was watching this all the time. They exit, two Germans holding this Jewish woman under her arms, one on one side and the other on the other side. She walks with this same purse [he means the handbag] ... and right below me... they walk up to the brook ... I go there and watch what happens next. They lead her, the third one walks in the back. So the third one in the back, and when they got there, there was such a pine there, they were standing by this pine, and they were talking in German... but I did not understand what they were saying, what was up... and the one who came in that carriage, the one with a crew cut, such a clever guy, in civilian clothes, took out a pistol and shot her in the back of

³¹ It needs to be underlined that an interlocutor speaking a local dialect on a daily basis in the situation of an interview, when his statement was recorded, tried to adjust some dialectal expressions to the standard language. For instance he would say: *mieszkoł* instead of the dialectal *siedzioł*, *żył* instead of *zył*, or *już* instead of *juz*. In the presented testimonies I gave up any dialectal correction, trying to preserve the original version of the testimony recorded by a camera.

her head. She fell down [he shows how she fell]. They let go of her arms. Then he kicked her, turned her over and shot her in the heart. And he took this, you know, handbag, and they went to the watchtower. There they probably notified the village head, I remember it was Stasek Tylka, but who was the second one I do not remember. Maybe together with Jaś they dug here nearby, they dug a grave by the river and buried her. But then the huge flood came, you know, in a few years, and this water clearly took it. So that nobody looked for it after the war because it made no sense to look for it because we found that the water took this land. This Estera was maybe forty, forty-five years old (J.S., born 1927, Witów) (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.).³²

A PAINFUL TESTIMONY, AN INTRUSIVE PROOF...

For some of the interviewees, the pictures from the past appeared to be an intrusive proof, a testimony of unwanted, painful experiences, situations and events. In this context, the story recorded in the torn photograph taken in 1942 turned out to be symptomatic as if someone performed a kind of an execution in order to remove the disturbing trace of the past. The damaged photograph belonged to the inhabitant of Zakopane Olcza. During a meeting at her home, a woman found a photograph in her family album, a fragment of which was torn away. On a preserved piece of the photo there was a figure of a little girl dressed in a highlanders' outfit, in the background there was a figure of an

³² It was probably 1943, when after the liquidation of the ghetto in Nowy Targ (1942) and forced labor camps in Rabka, Zakopane and Czarny Dunajec, the final liquidation of Jews in the Nowy Targ district began. According to the findings so far, there were at least six such camps in Podhale during World War II: in Biały Dunajec, Czarny Dunajec, Nowy Targ, Zakopane (two) and Rabka (Berg-hauzen 1977: 22). In May 1943, the Jewish question ceased to exist in Podhale. Almost the entire Jewish community in Podhale was exterminated. Only a few survived (Kasperek 1990: 156–160). Unfortunately, the survival of the German Gehenna did not mean the end of the tragedy, as the dramatic history of the Jewish citizens of Nowy Targ shows. After the war several of them returned to their hometown in order to start a normal life. These included Leon Lindenberger and Ludwik Herz, who had previously been rescued by Oscar Schindler, and Dawid Grasgrun, the only survivor of the mass execution of Jews in the Nowy Targ cemetery in 1942. In 1946 they were brutally assaulted and murdered by armed bandits. According to preserved documents and the latest research carried out by Maciej Korkuć and Karolina Panz, the perpetrators of this disgraceful act were the people of Józef Kuraś, *nom-de-guerre* Ogień (Fire) (Panz 2012: 67). They died only because they were Jews. The murderers were guided by the same motives as the Nazi invader. Józef Kuraś "Ogień" (1915–1947) was one of the most well-known partisan commanders in Podhale during the Nazi occupation and after the World War II. Until 1947 he fought against the communist regime as a partisan of the anti-communist resistance (Dereń 1995).

elderly woman. Along the torn-off edge of the picture one could see a fragment of a bike wheel.

There is one such photograph here. (...) Oh, but here it is cut off. I am here. That Hitlerite was there. Mom cut it off and burnt it down. (...) There must have been a holiday and we went. This Nazi man was here... You can see the wheel of the bike. The bicycle wheel is visible. So he was on a bicycle and was riding from Kuźnice. And this is... taken immediately under the roundabout, where this forest is... Opposite the national park, there is such a house there. Mum is here right beside. Maybe it was this German, the Grenzschutz (Border Guard), who came to the paper mill to... and he must have known Mum that he ordered us to stop then (S.Ch., born 1933, Zakopane).

In this way, the figure of a German captured in the photograph, being the personification and materialisation of the wartime nightmare, was annihilated.

During meetings and interviews with the witnesses of German research, special emotions accompanied the presentation of photographs of people who died during the German occupation. This was the case with the photographs of the members of a numerous Gutt-Mostowy family from Szaflary, taken in the course of anthropological studies, preserved in the SRV files. They included, among others, the later victims of the murder carried out in 1944 by local informers with the participation of German functionaries. The daughters of the murdered Franciszek Gutt, browsing through questionnaires with detailed data of their entire family and photographs of their loved ones, experienced a new family tragedy. On the other hand, the documents even mobilised them to recover from memory those dramatic events as fully as possible, expecting at the same time that the entrusted history would be recorded and would become a testimony to the cruelty of both Germans and “their own folks”. With great commitment, but also in an atmosphere of a strong emotional tension, they tried to recreate the course of events in the house in which the drama took place and which still exists today. Their accounts, which evoked traumatic experiences, were interrupted from time to time by occasional silence. Tears often appeared in their eyes. The story is told by Maria, the oldest of the girls, brought to the grandparents’ house, where the bodies of the murdered were lying. She was brought there by Wojciech Kamiński, the then head (*wójt*) of Szaflary, who was ordered by the Germans to take the bodies of the victims. His words, “You will remember!”, repeated several times by Maria during the account she gave, sounded like a will.

I come, I open this door...When I went in, dad was... he lay here. Shot, and here was blood... He lay here like this, and here was blood, everything was whole because he was a healthy man... He was thirty-eight years old. He was young (...) I walk in, open the door, walk in and had to walk over dad. Because dad lay, lay here, so I would not manage and... I walk in further, grandma is lying under the stairs... One shoe on the stairs, the rosary on the stairs, and grandma is lying here. (...) And in this room there was a kitchen. There was a kitchen. Grandpa was sitting by the stove, such a kitchen stove... I thought he was alive. But I looked and, Jesus Christ, he had it hacked here... deep into the brain. He had a head cut, deep. He hacked him with an axe because they said they could not kill him, he ran when they shot him with a few bullets, he still ran to get an axe from under the cupboard. And they took this axe and they killed him with this axe. That is the way he was. And Jaś, my youngest uncle, was here under the knocked down cupboard, he lay here. He was crushed by the cupboard, they struggled probably because what else. They must have struggled because he was crushed by the cupboard. And he was also killed. This is what I saw. Torn, clothes disheveled, everything... Our poor granny also lay there under the stairs. She probably wanted to run upstairs or what. Well, we do not know, we do not know. Well, I was what, I was twelve years old but until today... so many years... I can't until today... because mum was giving me this house, when I got married, but I told mom that I cannot sit here because I still have everything before my eyes. It makes me cry... so many years... (M.G., born 1931, Szaflary) (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.).

The murder perpetrated on the Gutt-Mostowy family went down in local history of Szaflary not only as a testimony of the horror of the time of the war but also as a symbol of patriotic attitudes of those who were killed (Marduła 2008: 38–41). At the end of the war, on April 7, 1945, on the first anniversary of the murder, the second funeral of the victims took place in Szaflary, with the participation of almost all the villagers. During the solemn mass, Father Władysław Curzydło gave a sermon, fragments of which were then engraved on the pedestal of the Mostowy family tombstone: "Let the blood innocently shed with the martyrdom blood of all the Polish brothers plead for the freedom of our Catholic homeland, and give them eternal happiness. Amen" (Marduła 2008: 41)³³. Although the family tragedy of the Gutts was perpetuated in the collective

³³ According to Anna Marduła, her father Franciszek and uncle Władysław belonged to the partisan unit led by Wojciech Dusza "Szarota" from Odrowąż. Zbigniew Sikora writes more about the activity of this unit and its leader in his study *Krwawy ślad. Nieznani Bohaterowie Podhale* (A Bloody Trail. Unknown Heroes of Podhale) (2014).

memory of the Szaflary inhabitants, the issue of participation in the murder of local informers remained a taboo subject for years. There was no public talk of torturers. On the other hand, there were attempts by some Szaflary residents, who were probably related to the informers, to present the executions of the Mostowy family in terms of internal, neighbours' settlements. Only the passage of time and the determination of one of the daughters of the murdered Franciszek, Anna, allowed the whole story, together with the names of the informers, to be publicly revealed (Marduła 2008: 41).

Only a few excerpts from many recollections, which were recorded during the two years of the search, have been quoted here. These are accounts recorded during meetings, in situations when interviewees browsed through dozens of documents concerning themselves, their families and neighbors, or recorded in photographs of various places in the countryside. There was little interference in their statements, usually only when the interviewee expected such a reaction or asked questions about the questionnaires or photographs presented to them. In the reflection of the Podhale inhabitants themselves on the topic of German research, the question often arose of how it is possible that for several decades after the war they had never talked about it, but also completely rejected those events and cast them away into oblivion. In this context, the documents from the SRV collection played a significant role in restoring, extending and rebuilding the knowledge about the past with facts recovered from oblivion which in the eyes of our contemporaries gained the status of important events connected with the history of their families. During the interviews, relatives of our interlocutors, their children and grandchildren listened to the wartime accounts. Those interested in the subject asked about the history of the research and its course. They looked through the photos of their loved ones, often asking for photographs. "Can I get such a photo of granddad? I think a look alike" (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.) – asked a young boy from Harenda, looking at a photograph of his grandfather, who was registered in the German documentation as a teenage student of a highlander school in Zakopane. Another time, a 20-year-old Maruszyna inhabitant, intrigued by a photograph of his town from the past, asked for a copy of the document: "Oh, this is a photo from Maruszyna when there were still no houses there. I would like to have one like this. Would it be possible?" (original comment in dialect, trans. – K.D.).

A great interest in the activity of German anthropologists was also shown by representatives of local authorities, actively participating in the organization of lectures and exhibitions presenting archives related to the inhabitants

of their villages. In this way, both of them discovered German research as an important episode in their own history.³⁴

It should be stressed that the vast majority of the interviewees tried to recreate the situation of the German research and the accompanying emotions during the interviews. However, there were people who were reluctant to go back to those events and did not want to discuss the subject we were interested in. There were also cases when the interviewees, sharing their memories of the war, despite the SRV documentation, were not able to recall the research in which they participated.

The episodes recalled by our interlocutors during the war were presented and interpreted in different ways. The narrative competences of the witnesses played an important role in the process of passing on the past experiences (the textualisation of memory), at times bringing visual, expressive stories, at times short, incoherent messages produced in broken sentences. From the collected stories – these "texts of memory" – emerge individual images of the past, in which the period of the war, past events and situations acquire subjective shades, revealing the multitude of views of the past time. You can also identify in them different types of personalities, vulnerabilities and attitudes towards the past events which is characteristically illustrated by reactions captured during our research to the presented documents and subjects touched upon, starting from long moments of silence through the feeling of embarrassment, anxiety, fear, tears to laughter and irony. The latter could be considered as one of the attempts to neutralise the embarrassing situations, such as the need to strip naked during the examination. The acquired testimonies, which outline children's experiences from the perspective of today's elderly people, bring closer the reality of ordinary people's wartime existence, which significantly enriches the decreed official version of the history of World War II, usually constructed by the dates of important battles, agreements and treaties. These are the images of the occupation time, when life took place in an atmosphere

³⁴ Our research in Podhale has also encountered the interest and kindness of representatives of local authorities and local associations. Thanks to the involvement of these institutions, it was possible to hold meetings with the inhabitants of the villages for which the IDO documentation has been preserved. Discussions and recollections about the German research were accompanied by lectures and a presentation of the exhibition entitled "The population of Podhale in the light of German racial surveys", prepared by the IEiAK employees. In the years 2009–2011 such meetings were held in Szaflary (the Municipal Office), Nowy Targ (the Union of the People of Podhale), Rabka (the Cultural Association "Gościniec"), Biały Dunajec (the Municipal Cultural Centre), Poronin (the Municipal Office), Kościelisko and Witów (the Municipal Centre of Regional Culture) and in Bukowina Tatrzańska (the Bukowina Cultural Centre).

of constant danger, fear, uncertainty and constant struggle to survive, often marked by severe borderline experiences, such as death, crime, betrayal.

The materials collected during the research bring an extremely interesting amount of data for ethnologists. They are not only a valuable source of knowledge about the activities of German anthropologists and the Nazi occupation, but also constitute an excellent material for research on the phenomenon of memory. They touch upon phenomena which are key for individual and collective identity, such as remembering, forgetting and recalling, while confirming the findings of memory researchers that memory does not reflect past events by way of references, but it reconfigures data from the past from the perspective of contemporary needs, experiences and ways of perceiving the world. Thereby, the obtained accounts bring another important exemplification material to the anthropological reflection on the mechanism of translating direct experiences into texts of memory.³⁵ They also contain valuable data illustrating the process of restoring to social existence – also through the intervention of a researcher – the experiences and events that had been rejected and found themselves outside history and collective memory.

³⁵ Being aware of the complex and selective nature of memory and sharing the conviction that during the narrative process the experiences conveyed by the storyteller are subject to a kind of an interpretation, including unintentional falsifications of past events, I believe that the accounts obtained in this way carry cognitively valuable content. These are, first of all, individual testimonies presenting the experiences of specific, real persons, which reveal at the same time the process of taming, remembering and presenting past events. Secondly, these subjective accounts enshrined in emotions can complement and often verify wartime events. A symbolic example can be the story of the murder of the Gutt-Mostowy family, which took place in Szaflary, which is mentioned in the presented text. The version of events presented by one of the daughters of the murdered man was confirmed by the description of the crime contained in the diary of the then head of the village, Wojciech Kamiński. A fragment of W. Kamiński's memoirs, which was revealed by his family only in recent years, was made available to us by Anna Mardulą, a daughter of the murdered Franciszek Gutt-Mostowy. In 2014, a full version of Wojciech Kamiński's diary was published, edited by Anna Mlekodaj (Kamiński 2014).